2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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many girls liked to pretend that they had one of these Pipes at their play-lodge. They used a certain kind of flower to represent the Pipe and would put it outside the play-lodge in the same position as the real Pipe was placed. They smudged and sang Pipe songs just as their elders did. Once in a while they would pretend they were going to transfer the Pipe. Mud was smeared on their foreheads just as the Keeper used paint. The others would seize the new "Keeper," paint him, go through an imitation of the ceremonies, sing songs, and so on. At the end of the game, however, the rest of the children finally took the "Keeper" and dumped him in the water head foremost,—an indignity that would have been out of the question in regard to a real Keeper.

Thus it was evident how much children learned by observation. It was specifically stated in regard to the learning of songs that no one ever sat down with a child to teach him a special song or dance, that he would pick up songs and dances by hearing and seeing them performed at the various ceremonies. Similarly, according to both Coming Daylight and to Singer, there was no special teaching in regard to a knowledge of the Supreme Being. Children would know about Him because they would from infancy have heard older people mention Him. In the old days people never did anything without first saying a prayer. The prayers always started out by mentioning the name of the "One above the White Man," and then names of other beings followed.[6]

Training

Formal training, in skills necessary for women's work, was begun for little girls at an early age. This was usually in the hands of a female relative,—a grandmother or perhaps a widowed aunt,—to whom the child would be sent at about the age of seven years. The reason for removing a girl from her immediate family circle was said to have been to protect her virginity. Her parents wanted to send her "where no men were living, as they didn't want a girl around home with her father, brother, male cousins." Should there not be a suitable relative, however, the girls' parents would keep her at home and she would receive training in domestic duties from her own mother. In any case, the girl was sup-

[6] Religion is treated in full in Cooper Ms. 1949.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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769 —rather than the power-giving being who bestows upon the
787 recipient power the latter can use at will without having recourse to or summoning the original donor. No historical interpretation is here being suggested. It looks, instead, that Little Man's deviant power in the case was merely an idiosyncratic variant of the ghost helper concept to which, not wishing to assume the normal public offices of persons with ghost helpers, he attached to curing functions not for all ailments but for ailments caused by ghosts.

Personal Supernatural Powers

787 Supernatural power was acquired by an individual mostly for
778 success in war, accumulation of wealth, doctoring, gambling or love. It was obtained more commonly by quest, although often without quest, and could be transferred by sale, gift or bequest. It was bestowed by many different kinds of beings,—mostly quadrupeds, birds, snakes, rocks; in some cases, ghosts, indeterminate "persons" or "spirits." How and from whom power was acquired differed appreciably in accordance with the several above-listed kinds of power. These differences we shall describe later in detail under these several categories: war, wealth, doctoring, gambling and love. Before doing so, we shall deal with certain characteristics more or less common to all the above five categories.

782 In general, the Gros Ventres distinguished between three chief
● 869 methods of fulfilling their desires and wants: natural ability, prayer and power. A person was supposed to make best use of his native physical and mental endowments to acquire skills, to use his wits, to develop his capacities and personality,—in a word, to rely on himself and to stand on his own feet, whether as food-getter, craftsman, warrior, gambler, or what not. His second recourse, where his inborn and acquired abilities fell short or threatened to fall short of enabling him to fulfill his wishes and needs, was prayer, primarily although by no means exclusively to the Supreme Being. The third choice, in the ideal order, was resort to power.

Turn Toes, for instance, as an orphaned boy used to be advised

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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by his grandfather: "Do not seek doctoring power, but pray to the Supreme Being. This is enough." 782 869

According to The Boy, "Parents in advising their children how to conduct their lives would counsel them: 'Do not have ambition to have power like medicine men, else you will not live long. A medicine man forfeits his prospects of a long life and dies soon [a point to which we shall return presently]. It is far better and safer to just pray, that is, pray to the Supreme Being, and pray all the time. Make prayer the guiding rule in your lives.' Some people acquire power either by sleeping out on the hills or without seeking it. In either case they have to pay the price in shortened, restricted, danger-beset lives. The most important thing of all is to pray, beg, plead. This makes by far for the most happy and good life. This is far above seeking power."

On another occasion, The Boy explained the situation as follows: "However great or renowned these men and women with powers were in the old days, and however much they enjoyed the powers sought by and conferred upon them, they (the powers) were all right only while they lasted. The old-time Gros Ventres knew definitely that people who had these various powers would not live out their full span of life. Parents when raising their children would tell them to avoid that kind of life. They would exert all the influence in instructing their children not to go out on hills and seek power, but to have ambition to acquire fame and respect from exercise of natural ability. They tried to school their children along these lines and [to teach them] that it was considered weak to have the powers from these sources,—from rat, mountain, prairie chicken, and so forth. This my father, Lame Bull, told me all the time, and all the rest of the people told their sons and daughters this same rule of life. And the criers with the chiefs of the tribe, when they walked around on a nice calm day, would surely go into this matter, making it perhaps the main subject of their lecture. But still it [power seeking] was done, against such advice and against better judgment and better experience. All of these fellows who had these powers died prematurely." [203]

Thomas Main had many times heard his grandfather, Lame Bull,

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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say: "It is not good to ask that kind of a career [from powers]. It would be a life misspent and would be dearly paid for. Man's dearest possession is life, and this would be cut off."

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Charles Buckman had heard old men say that, although they had fasted and prayed over and over again for power, they had never had even a dream, and that this may have been why they had lived to old age.

According to The Boy, his father Lame Bull, when a young man, dreamed that the being who lived on Baldy Butte in the Bear Paw Mountains called him. So on one occasion when the Gros Ventres were camped near this butte, Lame Bull thought this was a good time to accept the invitation and go up on this butte and sleep. He was getting ready to do so, when his father gave him a sound scolding: "I always told you not to try to be a holy man, a man with power of that kind. Those who have such power do not live long. Forget about sleeping on the mountain and attend to the horses and lodge poles. We need you at home. Mind your own business. So Lame Bull did not get to sleep on the mountain. His father was boss."

Coming Daylight came back repeatedly to the same theme. "I am not a medicine woman [with power] and that is why I have lived to be such an old woman." "I am not sorry I refused the medicine power offered me in a dream. Medicine people die soon. It seems like they have a certain time to die and they don't live to be old like myself and Singer. These medicine people are not strong like others." "I never accepted any kind of power. Those who have power die too soon." "They [the beings] used to trick people into taking all these things [powers] because they wanted them to die. The holy dreams are very tricky."

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Singer gave her own experience. "I used to take a blanket or other offering and put it in deep water and pray that they [apparently the water monsters] would have pity on me. One night after I had just done this I dreamed that a person was standing there and that nearby lay the emaciated body of one who was very very sick. This person told me: 'I give you my body.' This is the way a being puts it in a dream when going to bestow power. Then the person showed me how to doctor, he used a pipe-stem which